

**REMARKS BY CONGRESSWOMAN MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO
BEFORE THE GUAM-U.S.-ASIA SECURITY ALLIANCE (GUASA) CONFERENCE
REBALANCE AT A CRITICAL POINT – A CONGRESSIONAL PERSPECTIVE
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Hafa adai,

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to speak before this very distinguished group gathered here on Guam. I want to recognize the leadership of Carl Peterson, Joe Arnett, Juan Carlos Benitez, Gerry Perez, and John Brown of GUASA as well as Paul Giarra and Patrick Cronin for organizing this event. I am confident that this week's events will build on the progress made at last fall's inaugural GUASA conference

I commend the group's effort to bring in experts from the Asia-Pacific region to Guam this week. We are joined by an impressive group of experts on Asian security issues and I'm glad to see that this group has assembled here on Guam to discuss the role that Guam and the Marianas play in the security of the region.

Last year I spoke a little about regional training opportunities in the Pacific and the need for leaders, including leaders in Congress, to take a broader view on the roles that Guam and the Marianas play in our regional security. I also indicated the need for groups here on Guam and other interested parties in DC to engage the Senate and make the argument for moving forward with funding and elimination of restrictions on Government of Japan funding.

Well, what a difference a year makes! There has been significant progress on a number of fronts regarding the realignment of Marines from Okinawa to Guam. On December 27, 2013 Okinawa's Governor Nakaima signed a landfill permit which allows for the construction of the Futenma Replacement Facility in Henoko. That action last year was, arguably, the most significant milestone in the US-Japan bilateral security relationship in the last several decades. The signing of the landfill permit, under the old agreement, was the moment at which both sides reached "tangible progress" in the realignment of Marines from Okinawa to Guam. Despite a number of false starts and setbacks the Governor signed the landfill permit allowing for construction to begin in Henoko. While this action may have some consequences for his political future in Okinawa, it was an important signal to military and political leaders in Washington, DC. It was the capstone of other efforts by the Abe Administration to move their relationship with the U.S. forward and to resolve outstanding or legacy issues like the Marine realignment. Moreover, as I discussed at length last year, there remained a linkage between Guam and Okinawa in the mind of some Senate leaders. In other words, they wouldn't truly embrace a realignment of Marines to Guam until the Japanese made more progress on their end. Make no mistake about it; the signing of the landfill permit erased any doubts about Japan's commitment to the realignment and modernizing our overall security relationship.

Before the signing of the landfill permit, the U.S. Congress took its own action to move forward with the realignment of Marines from Okinawa to Guam. During Conference Committee on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014, I successfully worked to reduce restrictions on Government of Japan direct contributions and fully authorized and appropriated nearly \$500 million in military construction projects for Guam. In particular, the compromise allows

for funds to be used for construction of facilities on Andersen Air Force Base and Andøya that support the Marine realignment. This was also due, in great part, to the efforts of Ambassador Sasae and other leaders in the Abe Administration who worked with my office to help the Senate better understand that their actions in not fully embracing the realignment had negative impacts in Japan.

Since last year there have been even more positive developments. The Department of the Navy released the Supplemental EIS here on Guam regarding the Marine main cantonment area and the proposed location for a firing range. The Navy did a good job in addressing our community's key concerns in this new EIS document. First and foremost they remain committed to the four pillars that were outlined by then Undersecretary of the Navy Robert Work and the key pillar being a net negative military footprint at the conclusion of the build-up. The supplemental EIS does not require the Department of Defense to take any additional land, consolidating the main cantonment area to their current footprint at Finegayan. Additionally, it calls for a firing range on Andersen Air Force Base. I understand that there remain some concerns about the proposed location for the firing range but, for the most part, the people of Guam support this new location because it does not require acquisition of additional land and does not impact historical lands like at Pagat. There are challenges on a federal agency level which is why I included the modified text of H.R. 4402 in this year's defense authorization bill. This language authorizes the Navy and Fish & Wildlife Service to work out their differences should the Andersen Air Force Base preferred alternative be the final location for the firing range. Again, the supplemental EIS is not perfect but it goes a long way to addressing the concerns of our local community from the last round EIS documents.

Additionally, the Department of Navy has finally submitted the Master Plan to Congress; this is the same master plan that has been requested in several defense authorization bills. The Master Plan goes into great detail about the layout for the main cantonment area, but more importantly, provides greater fidelity on the total cost of the overall effort. The Master Plan reaffirms a total cost of about \$8.6 billion with \$3 billion being in direct contributions from the Government of Japan. The master plan was truly the last hurdle to gaining full Senate acceptance of the realignment plans. The Navy's cost estimates remain firm and I believe that Senators and their staff have greater confidence in the current cost estimates.

Altogether, the events of the past year have been extremely helpful to move the realignment of Marines forward. For the first time in several years there is optimism and a belief that there is a growing comfort in the Senate to removing restrictions on realignment-related funds. I also underscore that I have appreciated the efforts of Guam stakeholders and leaders here at GUASA who have helped to advocate on behalf of the realignment. Last year's conference resulted in the publication of a report that highlighted the strategic importance of Guam and the broader Marianas region to US regional security interests. By re-focusing on the strategic elements of the realignment, and other military actions, this conference has helped leaders in DC make better and more informed decisions. And, as has been widely reported, the Conference Committee on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 began several weeks ago. As a conferee, I had the chance to participate in panel meetings to advocate that the restrictions on the Marine realignment be entirely eliminated. Although these were just preliminary meetings, staff continues to work in Washington DC to iron out the details, and I feel confident that we can continue to build on the progress of the past year and agree that it is time to move on entirely with the realignment.

Last year also saw a major breakthrough for the Air Force's Pacific Airpower Resiliency program. We finally overcame unfounded objections in the Senate over the program and we authorized the hardening of several facilities on Andersen Air Force Base. Pacific Airpower Resiliency is an important effort being undertaken by the Air Force to improve its access and power projection in the Asia-Pacific region. The program helps potential threats and adversaries in the region to re-think their calculus when assets are strategically hardened and dispersed throughout the region. It is a new way for the Air Force to think strategically in the region, but it is the right approach, especially given the current budget environment. We can no longer afford to think about building the next big base; rather we must look to access locations in the region and harden U.S. assets on U.S. soil.

Another component of this program is the development of a divert airfield in the CNMI. I understand the concerns in the CNMI about developing a divert capability on Saipan rather than Tinian. However, I feel the Air Force is proposing a reasonable solution that would allow for the divert capability of tankers to Saipan, and I will work closer with the Marine Corps over the coming years to jointly develop Tinian. Developing this capability in the CNMI is important to the long-term viability of air power and training in the Marianas region. We've had our fair share of local concerns here on Guam, but the lesson learned should be a very clear one. We can negotiate to a point, but if we overstretch we risk the entire program. I fear the same could happen for the divert field in the CNMI. I am concerned that the Air Force will look to re-start an EIS process elsewhere in the region like Palau. This type of inaction risks military construction funds that have already been authorized and appropriated and risks larger doubts about the viability of the overall program. I continue to urge Air Force officials to work with CNMI leaders, and I hope that reasonable accommodations can be reached in the coming months so we can move forward with this important initiative.

Additionally, last year's conference also had another major takeaway. In particular, it was clear from the participants that the U.S. federal government lacked a clear and comprehensive strategy that underpinned the rebalance efforts. Participants with GUASA and many other think tanks in DC have long lamented that the way in which the Obama Administration has rolled out the rebalance has harmed its intended positive outcomes because Congress and our allies in the region do not fully understand the intent behind the rebalance strategy and it was rolled out in a hodge podge fashion that further complicated understanding.

As such, in working with a bi-partisan group including Congressman Randy Forbes of Virginia, Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa of Hawaii and Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii we included section 1231 in the FY15 NDAA. The provision accomplishes two major goals; first it requires the Department of Defense and the State Department, working with interagency partners, to develop a strategy for the Asia-Pacific rebalance. Second, the provision would require the National Security Staff and the Office of Management and Budget to develop an implementation plan or budgeting guidance to all departments and agencies on how they prioritize projects or efforts that would support the underlying rebalance strategy. Our efforts are intended to support the rebalance strategy and I appreciate the help of GUASA participants in crafting this legislation. The setbacks and challenges that we have faced with the realignment of Marines from Okinawa to Guam are, to a certain extent, the result of a not clearly understood strategy that describes what the rebalance effort is truly about. Moreover, there is great reluctance in DC to accept the Department of Defense's Quadrennial Defense Review as a truly strategic document. We have tried to get the

Administration to undertake a real strategic review of the rebalance, but they have simply refused. The only way to accomplish this was to develop legislation and require that it be done.

Additionally, I also feel strongly that an implementation plan must be put in place by the White House so that there is more of a “whole of government” approach to the rebalance. Many understand the military, its diplomatic importance, and, to a certain extent, the economic points of the rebalance effort. However, there are many other aspects to the rebalance that can be realized if there is clear implementation guidance that budget officers at the many departments and agencies can use in the development of their annual budget documents. The rebalance must be engrained in the bureaucracy if it is to remain viable in successive Administrations whether they are Republican or Democrat. While it will take legislative efforts to develop an implementation plan, I believe that we have support for this endeavor.

Last year, I also spoke about how Department of Transportation could and should prioritize some of its larger programs and projects to support the broader rebalance effort. Unfortunately, this is not occurring and we must do more to make the rebalance a whole of government effort because that is what our partners and allies in the region are asking of this country. It’s not hard to accomplish but we have to get the cogs of the bureaucracy moving in the right direction. I will continue to work with my colleagues to make sure that this language is ultimately included in any final Conference Committee outcome on the FY15 NDAA. I expect some pushback from the Administration who will argue that such an endeavor is time intensive and costly, but I would argue it is too costly to NOT undertake this effort if we are truly serious about the rebalance strategy. And, again, I appreciate the efforts of GUASA for highlighting these points last year and for some of last year’s participants providing guidance as we drafted the legislative language included in this year’s defense authorization bill.

Having a clearly understood strategy and implementation plan would help to counter some of the concerns that I have heard lately as the United States opened up a front against ISIL in Iraq and Syria. Let me make this very clear, our efforts to fight and deteriorate ISIL’s capabilities will not and should not have any impact on our broader efforts regarding the rebalance strategy. I raised and voiced these concerns to Secretary Hagel during a House Armed Services Committee hearing in September and he stated, “Our efforts against ISIL will not affect our commitment to Asia- Pacific, as the president has made very clear. That commitment, that rebalancing will continue. And I think we have, over the last couple of years, in particular, have made great progress as we have enhanced our relationships and partnerships in your part of the world.”

The fight against ISIL will take time, and I have no doubt that the United States will face other challenges in the coming years from threats or entities that were not necessarily well known. However, I do believe that this Administration, at least, will remain committed to the rebalance strategy. And, as I stated in my annual Congressional address this past April, “Guam will continue to play a critical role for the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. We are America’s forward presence in Asia, and we reassure our Asian allies that unlike Syria and Ukraine, the U.S. has forces at the ready and in the neighborhood to protect our interests. We must be mindful of the changing geopolitical dynamics and continue to advocate for our role in Asia.”

However, I would argue that the biggest challenge or threat to successfully implement our rebalance efforts would be not ending sequestration once and for all. Much like the concerns about ISIL, sequestration would not halt our rebalance efforts but it would significantly slow them down and

force the process to take a lot longer than currently anticipated. Sequestration would greatly challenge our operations and maintenance accounts because they are always targets in times of budget constraints. Look no further than this year's House defense bill; we raided our O&M accounts to the tune of nearly \$3 billion so that we could keep old and antiquated military equipment. But what does that mean for our military? It means that we will be challenged to properly equip and train our military. Over a decade of war has created one of the best trained and equipped militaries that the United States has ever maintained. We want to leverage that well trained force and ensure that they are training and engaging with partners, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. One of the keys to the rebalance is engaging in more bi-lateral and multi-lateral training exercises with partners in this region of the world. Moreover, we hope that such training will occur more often here in the Marianas region but if we let sequestration remain in place that will simply not occur. The Services will be forced to prioritize on items that are must haves and those types of engagements won't always make the list – some will but not what we envision for this region. When sequestration was in place last year important training exercises across the Asia-Pacific region were cancelled and that did have a negative impact on our image and commitment to the rebalance strategy. There is no reason to expect different outcomes if we leave sequestration in place in the coming year.

I am committed to ending sequestration and have been since its inception. However, there must be a balanced approach to ending sequestration and we have to put all options on the table including revenue enhancements, spending cuts and revisions to entitlement programs. We know how to solve this problem but we have lacked the political will to end sequestration once and for all. The two-year budget plan that was approved gave the government some time to plan but that runs out next year and sequestration comes back. I remain hopeful that after the November elections we will have greater clarity on the political make-up in Washington DC and I urge all Congressional leaders to sit at the table and hammer out an agreement that solves sequestration once and for all. Make no mistake about it – sequestration poses the greatest challenges to the rebalance and our military overall. So, let's eliminate those questions and concerns.

As I have outlined, since last year, we have seen significant progress across the spectrum of security matters for our region. We see progress on the realignment of Marines from Okinawa to Guam and have a good chance of eliminating all restrictions on funding for this initiative in this year's defense authorization bill. We made progress to move the Pacific Airpower Resiliency program forward. Finally, we are also working to codify the rebalance strategy in the bureaucracy. However, we should not let this progress slow down our efforts in underscoring and reminding the people of Guam and the Marianas region of our strategic importance. That's why I appreciate that GUASA is holding this forum again on Guam. Our efforts must not cease; we must continue to educate and advocate for the role that Guam and the Marianas play in U.S. regional security. The lessons of the Senate obstruction demonstrate that we cannot take for granted what we all know and acknowledge. We must continue to highlight Guam's strategic importance and this needs to be clearly communicated, on a continual basis, to leaders in Washington, DC.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss these issues before this distinguished group. Si Yu'os Ma'ase for your hard work, dedication and commitment to our national security.